Which Dialytic Treatment Is Here to Stay, Peritoneal Dialysis or Hemodialysis?

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We are living in exciting times with major developments in hemodialysis techniques, and with an entirely new form of peritoneal dialysis having recently been investigated. The clinical nephrologist may be in a quandary to know which line of therapy is indicated for an individual patient nowadays; it is with this in mind that we have asked two distinguished nephrologists – Fred Shapiro and D.G. Oreopoulos – busy in the field of saving lives with regular dialytic techniques to express their views on the future of dialysis – as they see it.

It seems to us that they have been cautious, and somewhat non-partisan to a laudible degree, in extolling the virtues of their own particular technique. Nevertheless, the bottom line seems to be that, for some patients, peritoneal dialysis is possible by continuous ambulatory peritoneal dialysis without an ‘either or’.

We are sure that both forms of therapy are here to stay. We are not prepared to hazard a guess as to what proportion of the dialysis population will be on peritoneal dialysis in 2 years time, and what proportion will be on hemodialysis.

We earnestly hope for the ‘golden age’ when transplantation of cadaver grafts will be truly competitive with hemodialysis and peritoneal dialysis, and will offer people in countries where dialysis is not readily available a chance to survive.